

I submit that Money does not equal Free Speech

The basis for a Right to Free Speech springs from the inherent desire of every controlling power to limit decent and the sharing of intellectual thought. To allow these controlling powers to also control speech is to stifle a free society.

Corporate control of the media (and for that matter the Government) is at an all time high in this country. Money buys power, control...and it buys speech. When a handful of wealthy corporations are allowed to control the content of what is placed into the public domain, there is as much risk to a free society as if it were done by the Government itself. And further, when these corporations are able to buy influence within the Government... the line between Corporate and Government speech begins to disappear altogether.

The right to free speech is predicated upon equal access to the "soapbox" for everyone. If someone can afford a taller soapbox then they have an obligation to allow others to use it equally. Otherwise their speech becomes more "equal" than another's. This was the root principal behind the **Fairness Doctrine** for network broadcasting, and it worked!

The **Fairness Doctrine** was at least an attempt to ensure that the networks made an effort to be fair & balanced. Instead, we have the Fox News network, owned by Rupert Murdoch, that simply uses those words as a slogan. I highly recommend the documentary entitled "**Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism**" to illustrate the issues related to media ownership and how it affects content.

Since repeal of the **Fairness Doctrine**, the media has become replete with partisan talking heads, and any sense of balance has been lost. The FCC controlled air waves are the soapbox of the masses, and the time has come for the FCC to take back from the grip of Corporate interests what rightfully belongs to all of us.

"There is nothing in the First Amendment which prevents the Government from requiring a licensee to share his frequency with others.... It is the right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount."

- U.S. Supreme Court, upholding the constitutionality of the Fairness Doctrine in Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. FCC, 1969.

This message has been lost. Disney now owns ABC and controls what ABC will broadcast. Together they aired a dramatization of the decisions and actions leading up to the most horrendous tragedy our country has ever known... September 11th. This work was even marketed and packaged as a documentary to High School students via the Scholasitc company despite being written and produced by partisans and containing blatantly false re-creations of the facts. This is an abuse of the public trust placed in that network by the FCC license that it holds. Disney and ABC should be held accountable for the breach of that trust.

Broadcast licenses are only supposed to be renewed if the broadcast station meets the "public interest, convenience, or necessity." This work, aired on ABC affiliates nationwide, satisfies none of these criteria. Rather, it stands as a seminal example of how bad things have become.